

An Open Letter from State Senator David P. Sokola



"I just wanted to update you, that after many discussions and deliberations, the Bond Bill Committee voted unanimously to include the \$13M towards the Statewide Trails and Pathways initiative. \$3M will be allocated to DNREC for trail funding, while \$10M is planned to go to DelDOT for the pathways portion.

"While I have been continuously advocating for this funding to be included in the Bond Bill, I do not believe it would have happened without your help and support.

The numerous emails and phone calls that have been received by the legislators on the committee, really went a long way to bolster support for this initiative. I

would also like to commend all the individuals who attended the hearings; your

presence was noticed and appreciated. Thanks should also go to James Wilson, Executive Director of Bike Delaware, and Amy Wilburn, Chair of the Delaware Bicycle Council, as they deserve a lot of credit for rallying people behind this effort and helping to promote awareness. If you are familiar with either one of them, I'd encourage you to thank them as well!

"As I am sure you can understand, many issues that are addressed by the General Assembly can oftentimes be contentious and stir strong emotions within our communities. Even with an issue such as this, there were some individuals who thought that the funding should have been directed elsewhere and to other programs. I believe that the health benefits of developing and expanding the walking and biking trails here in Delaware will far outweigh the upfront costs, and I plan to continue to offer my support. I also greatly appreciate the respectful manner in which many of the supporters conducted themselves while petitioning the legislators to add the funding.

"While the hard part of getting the funding included in the Bond Bill was successful, we still have two crucial votes to get through before the funding is guaranteed. Sometime next week, the House of Representatives will consider and vote on the Bond Bill in its entirety, followed by the Senate. If all goes well, the bill will pass both chambers and I would anticipate the Governor signing the bill shortly thereafter.

"Thanks again for your support, and I am looking forward to the time when the Governor signs the bill into law. "

David P. Sokola, State Senator, 8th District